Media Argumentation

_Dialectic, Persuasion, and Rhetoric_

Media argumentation is a powerful force in our lives. From political speeches to television commercials to war propaganda, it can effectively mobilize political action, influence the public, and market products. This book presents a new and systematic way of thinking about the influence of mass media in our lives, showing the intersection of media sources with argumentation theory, informal logic, computational theory, and theories of persuasion. Using a variety of case studies that represent arguments that typically occur in the mass media, Douglas Walton demonstrates how tools recently developed in argumentation theory can be usefully applied to the identification, analysis, and evaluation of media arguments. He draws on the most recent developments in artificial intelligence, including dialogical theories of argument, which he developed, as well as speech act theory. Walton provides a structural analysis not only of individual types of argument commonly employed in the mass media, but also of pragmatic frameworks (models of goal-directed conversation) in which such arguments are used. Each chapter presents solutions to problems central to understanding, analyzing, and criticizing media argumentation.

Douglas Walton is professor of philosophy at the University of Winnipeg. An internationally known scholar and author of more than thirty books in the areas of argumentation, logic, and artificial intelligence, he has received major research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Isaak Walton Killiam Memorial Foundation. Dr. Walton also received the ISSA Prize from the International Society for the Study of Argumentation for his contributions to research on fallacies, argumentation, and informal logic.
Media Argumentation

_Dialectic, Persuasion, and Rhetoric_

DOUGLAS WALTON

_University of Winnipeg_
Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University’s mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521876902
© Douglas Walton 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data
Walton, Douglas N.
Media argumentation : dialectic, persuasion, and rhetoric / Douglas Walton.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
isbn 978-0-521-87690-2 (hardback) – isbn 978-0-521-70030-6 (pbk.)
bf177.5v3245 2007
168–dc22 2006101030
isbn 978-0-521-87690-2 Hardback
isbn 978-0-521-70030-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.
For Karen, with love
Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction

1 Logic, Dialectic, and Rhetoric
   1. The Viewpoint of Informal Logic
   2. The Old Dialectic of the Greeks
   3. The Opposition between Rhetoric and Dialectic
   4. Topics and Fallacies
   5. Persuasion, Social Influence, and Democracy
   6. Argumentation Schemes
   7. Basic Practical Reasoning
   8. Value-Based Practical Reasoning
   9. The Star Trek Example
   10. The Aims of Dialectical and Rhetorical Argumentation

2 The Speech Act of Persuasion
   1. The Belief-Desire-Intention Approach and the Commitment Approach
   2. Basic Components of Persuasion
   3. Chaining of Argumentation
   4. Types of Dialogue
   5. Deliberation
   8. Negotiation Dialogue and Persuasion
   9. Relevance and Argument Diagramming
   10. The Cognitive Component of Persuasion
   11. The New Definition of the Speech Act of Persuasion
### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Negative Connotations</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Public Discourse and Reason</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Appeal to the People Revisited</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Dialectical Viewpoint on Propaganda</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Persuasion and Propaganda</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Characteristics of Propaganda</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is Propaganda Necessarily Dishonest or Irrational?</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Openness to Contrary Evidence</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Deceptiveness and Relevance in Propaganda</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Evaluating Argumentation in Propaganda</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Appeals to Fear and Pity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Appeals to Fear and Pity in Mass Media</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Appeals to Fear</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Appeals to Pity</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Respondent-to-Discourse-Dialogue Problem</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Simulative Reasoning</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Dual Process Model of Persuasion</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The Structure of Appeals to Fear</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The Structure of Appeals to Pity</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Multi-agent Structure of Both Types of Argument</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>When Are Appeals to Fear and Pity Fallacious?</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ad Hominem Arguments in Political Discourse</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Classifying the Types of Ad Hominem Argument</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Circumstantial and Other Types</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Argument from Commitment</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Gore Case</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Battalino Case</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Classifying the Argument in the Battalino Case</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Evaluating the Argument in the Battalino Case</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Implicature and Innuendo</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Evaluating the Argument in the Gore Case</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Evaluating the Arguments Rhetorically and Dialectically</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arguments Based on Popular Opinion</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Influencing the Mass Audience</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Appeal to Popular Opinion as an Argument</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Cases in Point</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Form of the Argument</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fallacious Appeals to Popular Opinion</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Endoxa in Greek Dialectic</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Public Opinion as Informed Deliberation</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>A More Careful Basis for Evaluating Cases</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

9. Viewing the Public as an Agent 222
10. Evaluating Appeal to Popular Opinion 224

7 Fallacies and Bias in Public Opinion Polling 228
  1. Definitions and Sampling Surveys 229
  2. Question Wording and Emotive Bias in Polls 235
  3. The Structure of the Question 239
  4. Forcing an Answer 244
  5. Use of Polls by Advocacy Groups 249
  6. The Advent of Deliberative Polling 254
  7. Argumentation Schemes and Critical Questions 259
  8. Using Formal Dialectical Models of Argumentation 263
  9. Combining Dialectical and Empirical Methods 267
10. Conclusion and Summary of Fallacies 270

8 Persuasive Definitions and Public Policy Arguments 275
  1. Stevenson’s Theory of Persuasive Definitions 276
  2. Cases of Public Redefinitions 281
  3. Wider Implications of These Cases 288
  4. Definitions in the New Dialectic 292
  5. Proof of Legitimacy of Persuasive Definitions 297
  6. Argumentation Schemes Relating to Definitions 300
  7. The Speech Act of Defining 308
  8. Evaluating Persuasive Definitions 310
  9. What Should the Rules for Persuasive Definitions Be? 316
10. Conclusions 319

9 The Structure of Media Argumentation 323
  1. Rhetoric and Dialectic Reconfigured 324
  2. The Respondent-to-Dialogue Problem Revisited 327
  3. Direct and Indirect Media Argumentation 330
  4. Star Trek: The Rhetorical Dimension 334
  5. Argumentation Strategies 338
  6. Plan Recognition 342
  7. The Solution to the RTD Problem 347
  8. Fifteen Basic Components of Media Argumentation 350
  9. The Persuasion System 353
10. Computational Dialectics for Rhetorical Invention 355

Bibliography 361
Index 373

Color plate section follows page 34.
Acknowledgments

Some of the material in this book is based on material in journal articles previously published by the author. The previously published materials have been modified to fit as revised material in parts of chapters.

Chapter 3 is based on “What Is Propaganda and Exactly What Is Wrong with It?” Public Affairs Quarterly 11 (1997): 383–413. The work in chapter 3 was supported by a Fellowship from the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) and a Research Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada during the academic year of 1990–1991. Thanks are due to Erik Krabbe for discussions and to the members of the NIAS Research Group on “Fallacies as Violations of Rules of Argumentative Discourse,” Frans van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, Sally Jackson, Scott Jacobs, Agnes van Rees, Agnes Verbiest, Charles Willard, and John Woods.

Material from two previously published papers is included in chapter 5: “Use of Ad Hominem Argument in Political Discourse: The Battalino Case from the Impeachment Trial of President Clinton,” Argumentation and Advocacy 36 (2000): 179–195, and “Case Study of the Use of Circumstantial Ad Hominem in Political Argumentation,” Philosophy and Rhetoric 33 (2000): 101–115. The former paper was written while I was on study leave in Perth, Australia, and Eugene, Oregon, in 1997. I would like to thank the Department of Philosophy of the University of Western Australia for providing facilities for research, and the Oregon Humanities Center (University of Oregon) for supporting my research on this paper. I would also like to acknowledge some comments made by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. The latter paper arose out of the graduate seminar on argumentation I gave as a visiting professor at Northwestern
University in the Department of Communication Studies in 1999 and a public lecture given at Northwestern in April 1999. My visit was also supported by a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship. Among the many individuals who contributed to the paper by raising questions and making comments, I would especially like to thank Mike Leff, Jean Goodwin, Steve Wildman, David Zarefsky, Robert McKown, Lynn Clarke, Adrienne Brovero, Michael Geiser, Horoko Okuda, Susan Sattell, and Michael Pfau. For support of the research in this paper, I would like to thank the Canada-U.S. Fulbright Foundation, the Department of Communication Studies of Northwestern University, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. During a later phase of the work in 2004, discussions with Mark Aakhus and David Zarefsky turned out to be extremely helpful.

Chapter 6 is partly based on “Evaluating Appeals to Popular Opinion,” *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines* 20 (2000): 33–45. The material in the paper has been considerably revised, and much new material has been added.

Chapter 8 is based on “Persuasive Definitions and Public Policy Arguments,” *Argumentation and Advocacy: The Journal of the American Forensic Association* 37 (2001): 117–132. Much of the paper has been revised, and considerable new material has been added.

I gained some valuable insights into argumentation and computing at the Symposium on Argument and Computation at Bonskeid House in Perthshire, Scotland, in June and July 2000. I would especially like to thank Tim Norman and Chris Reed for organizing the conference. I would also like to thank the following conference participants for lectures and discussions that have influenced my thinking on models of argumentation and deliberation: Trevor Bench-Capon, Daniela Carbogim, Jim Crosswhite, Aspassia Daskalopulu, John Fox, Jim Freeman, Janne Maaike Gerlofs, Michael Gilbert, Rod Girle, Floriana Grasso, Leo Groarke, Corin Gurr, David Hitchcock, Hanns Hohmann, Erik Krabbe, Peter McBurney, Henry Prakken, Theodore Scaltsas, Simone Stumpf, and Bart Verheij. In the second term of 2001, during my time as visiting professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona, I began to appreciate how the study of some phenomena central in rhetorical persuasion could benefit from new tools developed in computing and argumentation. For helpful discussions during this period, I would like to thank Joe Bonito, Michael Dues, Hans Hansen, Scott Jacobs, Sally Jackson, Raymie McKerrow, Robin Nabi, Chris Segrin, Kyle Tusing, David Williams, and Ron Wright. Support during this period was
Acknowledgments

provided by a half-year study leave granted by the University of Winnipeg and a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Finally I would like to thank Tom Gordon, Henry Prakken, Chris Reed, and Bart Verheij for many discussions over the period of 2002–2006 that helped to sharpen my grasp of new developments in artificial intelligence that are turning out to be essential to recent advances in argumentation technology. I would like to thank Christian Kock for allowing me to preview his paper for the 2006 ISSA Conference. And I would like to acknowledge the support for my continuing research through my Research Grant on Dialogue Systems for Legal Argumentation given by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 2005. For help during this latter period leading up the publication of the book, I would like to thank David Godden and Fabrizio Macagno. Rita Campbell prepared the index, and Ruth Lowe helped with proofreading.